

## CLAIMS

1. A switch comprising:  
a channel fault unit generating first fault information and  
a switch fault unit generating second fault information;  
the channel fault unit communicating control or fault information with the switch  
5 fault unit in response to the first fault information generated by the channel fault unit or  
in response to the second fault information generated by the switch fault unit.

2. A method of operating a switch comprising the steps of:  
generating first fault information;  
generating second fault information; and  
communicating control or fault information in response to the first fault  
5 information or in response to the second fault information.

3. The invention of Claim 2 further comprising the steps of transmitting a fault  
message in response to communicating the control and fault information.

4. A switch comprising:  
means for generating first fault information;  
means for generating second fault information; and  
5 means for communicating control or fault information in response to the first fault  
information or in response to the second fault information.

5. A network interface card comprising:  
network fault detection logic generating network fault information;  
processor fault detection logic generating processor fault information;  
a first pathway communicating the network fault information generated by the  
5 network fault detection logic; and

a second pathway, separate from the first pathway, the second pathway communicating the processor fault information generated by the processor fault detection logic.

6. A method of operating a network interface card comprising the steps of:  
generating network fault information;  
generating processor fault information;  
communicating the network fault information using a first pathway; and  
5 communicating the processor fault information using a second pathway separate from the first pathway.

7. A network interface card comprising:  
means for generating network fault information;  
means for generating processor fault information;  
a first means for communicating the network fault information; and  
5 a second means separate from the first means, the second means for communicating the processor fault information.

8. A method of isolating a network interface card fault, the method comprising the steps of:  
receiving network fault information;  
receiving processor fault information; and  
5 isolating the network interface card fault in response to the network fault information and in response to the processor fault information.

9. A method of isolating a switch fault comprising the steps of:  
receiving first fault information generated by a first switch fault unit;  
receiving second fault information generated by a second switch fault unit; and  
5 isolating the switch fault in response to the first fault information generated by the first switch fault unit and in response to the second fault information generated by the second switch fault unit.

10. The invention of Claim 9 wherein the first switch fault unit and the second switch fault unit are located in a single switch.

11. The invention of Claim 8 wherein the first switch fault unit and the second switch fault unit are located in a different switch.

12. A method of generating a switch fault message from a switch comprising the steps of:

detecting a fault;  
setting a timer in response to the step of detecting the fault;  
5 attempting to recover the fault after the step of setting the timer; and  
generating the switch fault message after the step of attempting to recover the fault.

13. A method of generating a processor fault message from a network interface card, the method comprising the steps of:

detecting a fault;  
setting a timer in response to the step of detecting the fault;  
5 attempting to recover the fault after the step of setting the timer; and  
generating the switch fault message after the step of attempting to recover the fault.